

24 January 2020

Principal's Message: Important Information for Sec 1 Students on 'Learning for Life'

Dear Sec 1 students,

Introduction

1. It has been almost a month since you joined the Bowen family and I hope you have enjoyed your learning thus far.
2. In Bowen Secondary, we place great emphasis on **Learning for Life (LFL)**, i.e. deep and authentic learning, and ensuring that you are **future-ready**. This is important because the world is advancing rapidly and you need to learn how to anticipate and rise above changes you will encounter when you enter the working world. This emphasis was reinforced by our Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong who said on 5 Jan 2019 that, 'we want to inculcate in young Singaporeans the passion to "learn for life" so that you are all prepared for the future economy.'
3. With LFL, we aim to enable you to experience greater '**joy of learning**' while acquiring deep skills and knowledge. Hence, it is important that you understand what LFL means in Bowen and make full use of the opportunities here to become a much more **curious, creative, collaborative, and confident learner**.

Our goal is that you will discover your strengths and interests, grow them and love what you learn and do.

How your teachers will teach?

4. With LFL, you can look forward to **experience learning in different ways and via different modes**. Your teachers will incorporate real-time, real-world content both in and outside the classroom. Lessons will involve more group discussions, guided research projects, and/or reviews and reflections. You could also be tasked to prepare and deliver more dynamic class presentations, by you and in your teams. Your learning will also focus more on:
 - **Mastery learning** – helping you to confidently grasp your learning material; challenging you to acquire a **higher level** of knowledge and skills and imbuing in you a 'can-do' spirit to close your learning gaps.
 - **Metacognition** – equipping you with '**thinking tools**' so that you can become more aware of how you learn, understand and review your work. With greater focus and control, you will be able to analyse and synthesise ideas and concepts more thoughtfully.



Students measuring circumference of a table

- **21st Century Competencies (21CC)** – broadening your experience in school so that you can become **all-round students** in **character, knowledge** and **skills**: (i) Civic literacy, global awareness and cross-cultural skills (ii) Communication, collaboration and information skills (iii) Critical and inventive thinking skills.

5. **To make the most of these experiences: Be more self-directed. Be more empowered in your learning.** Use these experiences to understand how the world works, explore your strengths and interests, and hone your communication skills.



Students extracting strawberry DNA during Science lessons.

When buffeted by the waves of change, we must not remain static. We should adapt, grow, and rise above the challenges. As someone once said, 'You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.'

How we will help you stay on track?

6. Your teachers will design lessons incorporating '**Assessment for Learning**' (AfL) strategies such as strategic questioning, peer critique, quizzes and bite-sized tests so you can regularly practise applying your knowledge and honing your skills, and know whether you are on track. AfL will be ongoing throughout the term so that you will receive regular feedback.
7. AfL will not count towards your overall year-long results. Teachers will monitor your progress closely so they can give you more support should you need it.

How you should take advantage of Learning for Life

8. As there will be fewer assessments that count (only one set per term) towards your end-year Overall grade, you should
- a. **Take advantage of teachers' feedback** to work on your areas of needs and make the effort to seek clarification from your teachers if you have any questions.
 - b. Consciously **give yourself the time and space to explore your strengths and interests, and aim for personal mastery learning** (in studies, CCA and your hobbies).
 - c. **Explore your subjects** to a greater depth and breadth; follow your curiosity to other interests. Do not feel anxious or pressured to spend extended periods of time studying or aiming only for straight As.

Let's enjoy ourselves learning for life!

Yours sincerely,



Mr Liu Earnler
Principal on behalf of All Teachers @ Bowen

.....

More Details on Learning for Life

How we will assess your learning: Term Assessments and Exams

1. To provide more time for deep learning:

- There will no longer be Class Tests / Common Tests.
- From T1 to T3, each subject will be assessed through a Term Assessment (TA). **TA1** will be conducted over T1 W5-8, **TA2** over W5-8 and **TA3** over T3 W5-8. This will spread out the pace and enable you to continue with deep learning.
- In T2, Term Assessment 2 will take the place of Mid-Year Exams (MYE). In T4, there will be the usual **End-of-Year Exam (EYE)** (T4 W3-4).
- In other words, **each subject will only include one assessment each term that will count towards the year-long grade.** The weightings of the TAs and exams will be as follows:

Level	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Overall
Sec 1	TA1: 15%	TA2: 15%	TA3: 15%	EYE: 55%	100%

Noted: For D&T, FCE and Art, please refer to Para 5.

2. There will be two types of TAs.

- **Alternative Assessments (AAs)** assess learning through a practical test / written portfolio / class presentations, etc. Teachers will inform you about what the AAs require through a 'Task Sheet', given to you ~2-3 weeks before the deadlines. The deadlines for various AAs will be spread out in Weeks 5 and 6 (a few AAs may have deadlines in other weeks, because of the sequencing of the lessons) to help you manage your time.
 - **Pen and Paper (PPs)** tests will assess learning through the 'usual' kind of test formats. All PPs will be 50 min long and be conducted in the first period of the day, spaced out through Weeks 7 and 8. The normal timetabled lessons will resume from the 9am period onwards.
- 3. Each term, each subject will be tested through either AA or PP (not both).** If you take 7 subjects, you will have 7 AAs and PPs each term. Each term, about 3-5 subjects will be assessed through AAs while the rest will be assessed through PPs (this proportion may change across terms).
- 4. AAs and PPs are spread carefully throughout the 'TA Window' of Weeks 5 to 8,** to help you manage daily work and studying for the PPs. In addition, teachers will give students more time to complete daily homework. **The TA1 Schedule is included at the end of this letter.**
- 5. Design and Technology (D&T) lessons** are conducted in Semester 1 while **Food and Consumer Education (FCE) lessons** are conducted in Semester 2. The term assessment in T1 and T2 for D&T will comprise 30% and 70% towards the Sec 1 D&T grade; similarly, the term assessment in T3 and T4 for FCE will comprise 15% and 85% towards the Sec 1 FCE grade. **Art** is taught throughout the year. There is no term assessment in T1. The term assessment for T2 and T3 will comprise 15% respectively and 70% for T4.

How about CCAs?

- 6. As CCAs are an integral part of your holistic learning, your CCAs activities will continue during TA Windows.** This will help you learn to multi-task and manage your time.
- In Term 1, CCAs will continue during the TA1 Window.
 - In Term 2, TA2 takes the place of the 'traditional' mid-year exams (MYE). For Sec 1 students, as TA2 is significantly 'smaller' than MYE, CCAs will continue till Week 6 (inclusive) to provide more time for your CCAs. CCAs will stand down in Weeks 7 and 8, and resume in Week 9.

- In Term 3, CCAs will continue during the TA3 Window. For all levels, CCAs will stand down at end of Term 3, so you can then focus on the End-of-Year Exam (EYE).
- In Term 4, CCAs will resume after the EYE.

How we will inform you of your progress

7. To reduce over-emphasis on examination results and peer comparisons, and to re-focus on holistic development, the termly results slips will be modified. E.g. results will be reported in whole numbers, while class and level positions will be removed.
8. At the end of every term, we will give you a Results Slip:
 - Term 1 Results Slip - results of TA1
 - Term 2 Results Slip - results of TA1, TA2 and First Combined
 - Term 3 Results Slip - results of TA3
 - Term 4 Results Slip – results of TA3, EYE and Overall
9. Your FTs will write their remarks in your results slips to share your **holistic growth**. They will also speak with your parents / guardians who attend the Term 2 Meet-the-Parents session about your development too.

Sec 1 Term Assessment 1 Schedule

Term/Week	Day	Date	Classes / TGs	Alternative	Pen and Paper (8)	Venue
Term 1 Week 6 (10 - 14 Feb 2020)	Students will submit tasks during lessons		All Classes	D&T - AA (Ideation)	NIL	
			All TGs	Science Practical Test		
			TG1, 6	CPA - Design & Craft		
Term 1 Week 7 (17 - 21 Feb 2020)	Mon	17-Feb-2020				
	Tue	18-Feb-2020				
	Wed	19-Feb-2020				
Term 1 Week 8 (24 - 28 Feb 2020)	Thu	20-Feb-2020	All TGs		English	TG Venues
	Fri	21-Feb-2020	All Classes		HMT/MT/BCL	TG Venues*
	Mon	24-Feb-2020			NIL	
	Tue	25-Feb-2020	All TGs		Maths	TG Venues
	Wed	26-Feb-2020	TG 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8		Geog	TG Venues
	Thu	27-Feb-2020	TG 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8		Hist	TG Venues
	Fri	28-Feb-2020	TG 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8	Lit (Blog Post)		

Please note that:

- Students will sit for the assessments for Common Curriculum according to their Form Classes and Core Curriculum according to their Teaching Groups
- Alternative Assessments - Students will submit their tasks during lessons.
- * Students should check with MT teachers for details